

THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for using a computer system for interacting with a processing system to process a microdevice comprising the steps of:

providing processing information related to a microdevice as a task;
5 assembling the processing information for the task in the computer system;
providing the processing information for the task for off-line connection from the computer system to the processing system;
performing the task by the processing system independent of the computer system using processing information obtained through the off-line connection;
10 developing return information resulting from the processing system using the processing information; and
returning the return information through the off-line connection to the computer system.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of:
15 providing a processing system on-line with said computer system;
providing the processing information for the task for on-line connection from the computer system to the processing system; and
performing the task by the processing system dependent on the computer system using processing information obtained through the on-line connection.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of:
20 providing an operator mode;
using the processing information for the task in the operator mode from the computer to the processing system;
returning the return information in the operator mode through the off-line connection to the computer system; and
25 storing the return information in the computer system.

4. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of:
providing an administrator mode;
inputting the processing information related to the task in the administrator mode;
30 editing processing information related to the task in the administrator mode; and
storing processing information related to the microdevice for the processing system as the task in the administrator mode.

5. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of:

providing processing system setup and shutdown parameters;
providing processing system process-specific parameters;
sending processing system setup parameters to the processing system;
inputting the number of processed microdevices to be output from the processing
5 system;
sending processing system process-specific parameters to the processing system;
controlling the handling of microdevices;
processing microdevices; and
sending processing system shutdown parameters to the processing system.

10 6. The method as claimed in claim 5 including the steps of:
providing a number of microdevices;
determining the number of microdevices processed;
determining the number of microdevices handled; and
developing statistics from the number of microdevices processed and handled.

15 7. The method as claimed in claim 5 including the steps of:
serializing the microdevices; and
maintaining a log of the serialized microdevices.

20 8. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of:
combining a plurality of tasks to define a kit; and
performing the processing of a kit through the off-line connection.

25 9. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of:
providing microdevice information;
providing processing system setup parameters;
providing format information related to the off-line connection;
inputting the number of processed microdevices to be output from the processing
30 system;
providing the processing system setup parameters and format to the processing
system;
transferring the microdevice information from the computer to the processing system;
transferring the processing system format from the computer to the processing
system;
processing the microdevices;
obtaining information from the processing of the microdevices; and

transferring the information from the processing of the microdevices.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the step of:
transferring includes the use of a portable memory medium.

11. The method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the step of:
transferring includes the use of a direct communication connection.

12. The method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of
providing an administrator mode; and
protecting provision of the operator mode using a password input in the administrator
mode.

13. A method for using a computer system for interacting with a
programmer/feeder system to process a programmable microdevice comprising the steps of:
providing programming information related to a programmable microdevice as a task;
assembling the programming information for the task in the computer system;
providing the programming information for the task for off-line connection from the
computer system to the programming system;
performing the task by the programmer/feeder system independent of the computer
system using programming information obtained through the off-line
connection;
developing return information resulting from the programmer/feeder system using the
programming information; and
returning the return information through the off-line connection to the computer
system.

14. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:
providing a programming system on-line with said computer system;
providing the programming information for the task for on-line connection from the
computer system to the programming system; and
performing the task by the programming system dependent on the computer system
using programming information obtained through the on-line connection.

15. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:
providing an operator mode;
using the programming information for the task in the operator mode from the
computer to the processing system;

returning the return information in the operator mode through the off-line connection to the computer system; and
storing the return information in the computer system.

16. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:
providing an administrator mode;
inputting the programming information related to the task in the administrator mode;
editing programming information related to the task in the administrator mode; and
storing programming information related to the programmable microdevice for the programmer/feeder system as the task in the administrator mode.

17. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:
providing programmer/feeder system setup and shutdown parameters;
providing programmer/feeder system process-specific parameters;
sending programmer/feeder system setup parameters off-line to the programming system;
inputting the number of processed programmable microdevices to be output from the programmer/feeder system;
sending programmer/feeder system process-specific parameters to the programming system;
controlling the handling of programmable microdevices;
programming programmable microdevices; and
sending the programmer/feeder system shutdown parameters to the programming system.

18. The method as claimed in claim 17 including the steps of:
providing a number of programmable microdevices;
determining the number of programmable microdevices processed;
determining the number of programmable microdevices handled; and
developing statistics from the number of programmable microdevices processed and handled.

19. The method as claimed in claim 17 including the steps of:
serializing the programmable microdevices; and
maintaining a log of the serialized programmable microdevices.

20. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:
combining a plurality of tasks to define a kit; and

performing the programming of a kit through the off-line connection.

21. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:

providing programmable microdevice information;

providing programmer/feeder system setup parameters;

providing format information related to the off-line connection;

inputting the number of processed programmable microdevices to be output from the programmer/feeder system;

providing the programmer/feeder system setup parameters and format to the programmer/feeder system;

transferring the programmable microdevice information from the computer to the processing system;

transferring the programmer/feeder system form from the computer to the programmer/feeder system;

processing the programmable microdevices;

obtaining information from the processing of the programmable microdevices; and

transferring the information from the programming of the programmable microdevices.

22. The method as claimed in claim 21 wherein the step of:

transferring includes the use of a portable memory medium.

23. The method as claimed in claim 22 wherein the step of:

transferring includes the use of a local area network connection.

24. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the steps of:

providing an administrator mode; and

protecting provision of the operator mode using a password input in the administrator mode.

25. The method as claimed in claim 13 including the step of:

providing information for affecting changes selected from a group consisting of software, firmware, and a combination thereof by using the portable memory medium.